

# Jamsai Dogon

**Jam Sai** (sometimes spelled Jamsay) is one of the Dogon languages spoken in Mali, and the only one spoken in Burkina Faso apart for a few villages of Tomo Kan. It is one of the plains languages spoken in Dogon villages outside the Bandiagara Escarpment (the cliffs that the Dogon ethnic group is usually associated with). It is a major language in Koro, at the south end of the escarpment, and stretches as far north as Douentza. It is not mutually intelligible with other Plains Dogon languages, but is widely known as the prestige variety due to its use as the language of radio broadcasts. Dialects are *Domno tegu*, *Gono tegu*, *Bama tegu*, and *Guru tegu*; their degree of mutual intelligibility has not been recorded. Domno is the standard dialect, and considered the purest; *Guru* (Koro) is the dialect of that town.

## Phrases

Jamsai gets its name from a common response to a greeting: Jam sai, or "peace only." A typical Jam sai greeting goes like this:

- A: *Jam now* (do you have peace in the morning?)
- B: *Jam sai* (peace only)
- A: *Kanya now* (do your people have peace in the morning?)
- B: *Jam sai*
- A: *Taardé*

The greeting then repeats, with B asking all the same questions of A. "Taardé" is the way of the question asker telling the askee that he's done with his inquiry.

A few other common phrases and words:

- *E nam sayoba?* (Do your people have peace?)
- *Guinea nissama?* (Did you sleep well?)
- *Nya nyé* (*Eat!*)
- *Ejuko* (Good)
- *Ejila* (Bad)
- *ni inim* (Bathe—literally to put water on oneself)
- *Ewé* (market)
- *Yayerrem* (I will be right back—literally "I am coming there")
- *miten* (friend. Can also mean boyfriend/girlfriend)

## References

1. Jam Sai (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/djm/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)

Jam Sai	
Jamsay	
<i>Dyamsay tegu</i>	
Region	Mali, Burkina Faso
Native speakers	130,000 (1998) <sup>[1]</sup>
Language family	Niger–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dogon<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plains Dogon<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Jam Sai</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	djm
Glottolog	jams1239 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/jams1239">http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/jams1239</a> ) <sup>[2]</sup>

2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Jamsay Dogon" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/jams1239>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
- Heath, Jeffrey (unpublished) Jamsay Grammar ([http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jheath/Jamsay\\_Grammar\\_Jan2008.pdf](http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jheath/Jamsay_Grammar_Jan2008.pdf)). University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
  - Blench, Roger (2005). "A survey of Dogon languages in Mali: Overview" ([http://www.ogmios.org/ogmios\\_files/266.htm](http://www.ogmios.org/ogmios_files/266.htm)). *OGMIOS: Newsletter of Foundation for Endangered Languages*. **3.02** (26): 14–15. Retrieved 2011-06-30..
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